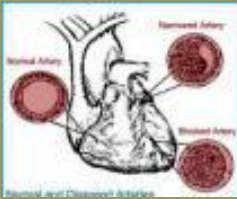# Oral Health And Total Health

Oral health is an important part of total health. In recent years, researchers have found more and more evidence that shows that there may be a link between bacteria in your mouth and some major medical problems.

Bacteria from the mouth can enter the blood stream and flow to organs throughout the body and begin new infections.

Research shows that this may:
➢ Lead to heart disease
  ● The direct link between gum disease and heart disease is unknown.
  ● People with gum disease are twice as likely to have certain types of heart disease.
➢ Increase the chances of stroke
  ● The fatty blockages in the arteries of stroke victims contain bacteria that come from the mouth.
➢ Increase a woman's chances of having a premature, underweight baby
  ● Pregnant women who have gum disease may be seven times more likely to give

  birth early and have low birthweight babies.
  ● The exact link is unknown but researchers think that gum infections may trigger chemicals that cause a pregnant woman to go into labor early.
➢ Make blood sugar levels in diabetics hard to control
  ● People with uncontrolled diabetes are more likely to have gum disease.
  ● Gum infections can cause diabetics to have problems controlling their blood sugar and can lead to serious illness.
  ● Diabetics have a hard time controlling their gum disease because they are at higher risk for infections and their gums do not heal as well.
➢ Cause breathing problems or worsen lung disease
  ● Bacteria in our mouth may be inhaled into our lungs and cause lung disease in those who already have some type of illness.
  ● Oral disease may increase the risk for pneumonia three to six times.
  ● Bacteria may make existing lung disease worse.

What can you to prevent possible health problems due to oral disease?

- See a dentist regularly for exams and cleanings
- Keep your mouth healthy – Brush at least twice a day and floss daily
- Keep your doctor informed of changes in your dental health and your dentist informed of changes in your overall health
- Use rinses that kill bacteria (Listerine, Peridex or PerioGard)
- Change your toothbrush after any illness or gum infection and regularly every two to three months